



## Personal Reflections

1/22/2016

Dear IMSA Community,

Warmest wishes of the holiday season to you and your families! With 2016 upon us, it's a great time to reflect on an incredible year. While the lack of a fiscal year 2016 State of Illinois budget has pre-empted much of our thinking, we can be proud of making advancements in key areas. I'm so pleased with your work, efforts and results. Each member of our IMSA Community—faculty, staff, students, parents, alumni, Board of Trustees and IMSA Fund Board members, our vendors, partners and stakeholders—pulled together in 2015. Our collaborative and supportive efforts made a difference in advancing IMSA.

This year we celebrated some of the great accomplishments of our students, faculty and alumni: Pranav Sivakumar '17, winner of the Virgin Galactic Pioneer Award at the 2015 Google Science Fair; Tavis Reed '16, gold medalist in the Chemistry/Biochemistry division of the national Afro-Academic, Cultural, Technological and Scientific Olympics; Dr. Claiborne Skinner named 2015 Outstanding Teacher of American History by the National Society Daughters of the Colonial Wars; Dr. Anita White, winner of Inspiring Women in STEM Award by *INSIGHT into Diversity* magazine and the SCI Teacher Award from the Society of the Chemical Industry; Sabrina Pasterski '13, named as a Hertz Foundation Fellow; Dr. Gabriel Demombynes '89, recipient of the 2015 Alumni Distinguished Leadership Award; Michael Suh '97, recipient of the 2015 Alumni Titan Award; and our alumni at the center of Cleversafe, one of Chicago's hottest tech companies and a leading developer cloud computing and object-data storage—Andrew Baptist '94, Greg Dhuse '99, Dustin Hendrickson '01 and Ethan Wozniak '99.

The generosity of our friends, staff, parents and alumni is impressive and the number of IMSA supporters is heartwarming. This month we received our 1,865<sup>th</sup> gift in fiscal year 2016 from a parent who joins over 7,420 total donors since 1999 in supporting IMSA's immediate and ongoing needs, which are not otherwise funded by the state. These gifts are truly inspiring and they enable the Academy to “advance the human condition.” I appreciate everyone's support in making a gift to the IMSA Fund. Thank you.

Together we reached thousands of students and educators across Illinois—in Chicago, Peoria and Metro East—through IMSA Professional Field Services programs. We made progress in defining how IMSA is moving forward in entrepreneurship through our Presidential Committee on Social Entrepreneurship. We are reclaiming our future through our Presidential Committee on Fiscal Sustainability and envisioning a time of less dependency on the State. And, we're moving forward with a new vision and a clear direction through our IMSA Impact and Priority Outcomes.

As we approach our 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary and envision our next 30 years, I'm convinced that we can honor the past and have a laser-like focus on our future. To this end, I recommended to



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our Board of Trustees a new Board Policy BAS: Board of Trustees Alumni Staff, and Emeriti and Ambassadors, which now includes the designation of IMSA Ambassadors, Emeriti Executive Educational Administrators and Trustees. The Board of Trustees approved the amended policy during their meeting on 11/18/15 and also the nomination of our first IMSA Ambassador, Ms. Catherine Veal. I'm looking forward to referring our distinguished past faculty, staff and Trustees for this designation in the near future.

Those outside of our IMSA community may not realize how hard we worked this year, how diligently we studied, how much we gave of ourselves, how well we engaged with one another, or how much we sacrificed. I've been told that those who know IMSA, *love IMSA*. This means our work behind the scenes is deeply appreciated—from our cafeteria, buildings and grounds, to our offices, classrooms and residence halls. Nothing is more rewarding than the personal knowledge of having made a difference, especially as our alumni continue to “advance the human condition” and contribute to the betterment of our world. Please know that I'm proud of your work and support of the Academy. Thank you for your past contributions and continuing efforts to support IMSA now and in the future.

I hope that you enjoy the time spent with friends and families during this season of giving and hope. I'm looking forward to what awaits us in the New Year as our work transforms dreams into reality through our special place—the jewel of Illinois—where exceptional teaching and learning is equitable and excellent, where minds grow and imaginations flourish.

Happy holidays!

José M. Torres, Ph.D.